

### PRELIMINARY INFORMATION REQUEST

The following constitutes an application for preliminary consideration for the nomination potential of a property to the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This does not mean that a property is being nominated to the registers at this time. Rather it is being evaluated to determine if it qualifies for such listings. Applicants will be notified of the board's actions in writing shortly after the meeting.

Please **type** and use 8-1/2" X 11" paper if additional space is needed.

All submitted materials become the property of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and cannot be returned.

1. HISTORIC NAME OF PROPERTY (if historic name is not known, use current name of area)

LAFAYETTE

2. LOCATION

A. Street or Route Lafayette Boulevard, Orleans Circle, Royale Place, Avenue de Grasse, Avenue Luxembourg, Vendome Place, Versailles Avenue, St Louis Avenue, Maury Crescent

B. County or City Norfolk, Virginia

3. LEGAL OWNER/S OF PROPERTIES. Include names and addresses of all property owners in district. Attach additional sheets if necessary. (See Attached)

Name:

Address:

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP

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#### 4. GENERAL DATA

A. Date or dates of selected buildings: Early 20th century

B. Approximate acreage: 112 acres

C. Architects or carpenter/masons (if known):

D. Primary Use of Buildings: Residential; Single-family

#### 5. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Located on the east side of the Lafayette River, south of Winona and north of downtown Norfolk, Lafayette Residence Park is, today, a large residential area that extends to Tidewater Drive on the east and is bounded on the southwest and north by the Lafayette River. The neighborhood is physically and visually bisected by the large and heavily travelled Lafayette Boulevard which generally runs north-south through the area; because of the visual barrier created by the boulevard, the chronological and physical development of the area, and the architectural integrity of the building fabric, only the cohesive community located northwest of this boulevard is being proposed for historic district status.

This section of the neighborhood is defined by its well-landscaped streets, and its gracious and solidly built, single-family dwellings. The streets are laid out in an irregular manner with one half-circle, Orleans Circle, forming the main and original core of the neighborhood. Orleans Circle is located on the outside edge around two, parallel roads separated by a wide, grassy median forming the interior of the half-circle. Off of this half-circle, and a later addition to this original plat, are a series of curvilinear and straight streets connecting and dead-ending in no apparent order. Narrow and unpaved alleys run parallel to Lafayette Boulevard and connect Versailles Avenue with Avenue de Grasse.

The neighborhood is oriented inward, with houses on the edges facing the public right-of-way and large yards at the rear taking advantage, when possible, of the view to the river. The

architecture consists almost exclusively of substantial, middle-income detached houses with one church occupying the corner of Avenue de Luxembourg and Vendome Place.

The houses making up the neighborhood are substantial and well-built. Those on Orleans Circle are the grandest and occupy the largest lots, while the others are set closer together and have smaller yards. The houses on Orleans Circle present a variety of styles including transitional Queen Anne/Classical Revival style farmhouse-type houses and imposing Colonial Revival style houses having American-four-square-type massing. The houses on the other streets tend to be smaller bungalow-type dwellings.

In general, the architecture is of frame construction, though several brick buildings are also found within the neighborhood. Defining architectural characteristics of Lafayette include single-story front porches facing the public streets; low, overhanging roofs with dormer windows; combination stone and shingled wall surfaces; slate roofs; and multi-paned window sash. Other defining features, such as weatherboarded walls, have been altered by the addition of vinyl siding and asphalt shingles.

Individual or groups of buildings of particular note include the house at 1524 Versailles Avenue, the row of houses on the south side of Versailles Avenue; the church at the corner of Avenue de Luxembourg and Versailles Avenue; and many of the individual dwellings on Orleans Circle. The house at 1524 Versailles provides an excellent example of the transitional Queen Anne/Colonial Revival-style house that is not unusual in suburban Norfolk. Indicative of the Queen Anne style, this 2-1/2-story frame structure has a varied roofline with cross gable roofs, projecting gables, hipped-roof dormers, and a wrap-around porch.

Architectural detailing, such as the pedimented gables, the paired Doric columns supporting the porch, the Venetian window in the front gable and the 1/1 sash windows are more characteristic of the Colonial Revival style.

The row of houses on the south side of Versailles Avenue are less "high-style" and represent the more typical, well-built, middle-income house found in this 20th-century suburban community. Although each house differs in detail and contributes to a varied streetscape, each one has similar overall massing, scale and detailing. They are all generally two stories tall, of frame construction, and have one-story front porches. They have small yards, with foundation plantings next to the house and narrow side yards separating them from one another. The whole provides a microcosm of the development of the area and survives in

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excellent and intact condition.

Setting itself apart from the residential architecture, but fitting into it as a neighborhood accessory, is the church at the corner of Avenue de Luxembourg and Vendome Place. Designed in a Gothic Revival style, it is a relatively low-lying brick structure, with a projection bay articulating the entry. Pointed-arch doors pierce the entry bay, while smaller, rectangular openings align the side walls of the nave. The church is surrounded by mature trees and fits well into the otherwise strictly residential enclave.

## 6. HISTORY

Originally a sparsely developed rural outpost, Lafayette Residence Park was laid out in 1903 as one of the many planned streetcar suburbs that emerged at that time in the northern section of the City of Norfolk. Though some development occurred in the community's first years of existence, many of the houses were built after World War I and into the 1920s, at the same time that the original boundaries of the planned community were expanded. Since then, some infill building has taken place, but in general, the area provides a cohesive grouping of early 20th-century residential architecture.

The original Lafayette Residence Park emerged in 1903 when the Lafayette Residence Park Company bought 112 acres of land on Lafayette Boulevard, across the river on the east side from the city park (Virginia Zoological Park and Lafayette Park). The original layout of the subdivision was an oval shape, formed by Orleans Circle on the northwest and Dupont Circle on the southeast, the center being bisected by Lafayette Boulevard. In May of that year, the Dispatch reported that the company was selling lots with a guarantee of high class improvements, including water, sewers, graded streets, trees and sidewalks.<sup>1</sup>

By 1908, according to the E. Lee MacFarlane, *Map of Norfolk, Portsmouth and Vicinity*, the area forming Orleans and Dupont Circle on either side of Lafayette Boulevard was fully platted, while the area north and west of Dupont Circle was underwater. Though far from mature, several houses located within this oval-shaped area were built in these early years.

By 1928, the water inlets had been filled in and the area forming the current boundaries of the Lafayette Residence Park were platted with streets and well-developed with houses. According to the 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, the original section of Lafayette Residence Park around Orleans Circle was more fully developed with houses than the area east of the boulevard.

At that time, all of the large, riverfront lots on Orleans Circle and facing the Lafayette River were built upon and the neighborhood boundaries were extended further north to include the lots organized around Vendome Terrace and Vendome Place. Though almost fully developed by this time, some vacant lots remained in the original boundaries of the area, while many lots

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<sup>1</sup> The Dispatch, May 25, 1903.

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remained unbuilt upon in the expanded areas. The development of empty lots and some replacement building occurred into the 1950s and 1960s.

In August 1979, the Norfolk City Council declared Winona and Lafayette Residence Park a conservation area. This conservation area embraces 310 acres and contains approximately 820 structures.

## 7. PHOTOGRAPHS

Black and white photographs and color slides of general views and streetscapes must be provided. Photographs of important buildings in district would also be helpful. The inclusion of photographs is essential to the completion of this application. Without photographs, this application can not be considered.

Photocopies of select photos are attached; actual photos have been submitted in VDHR Photo envelopes.

## 8. MAP

Please include a map showing the location of the proposed district. A sketch map is acceptable but please not street route numbers, addresses, buildings, prominent geographic features, etc. Please include a "north" arrow. This form can not be processed without a map showing the property's exact location.

See attached

## 9. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

## 10: APPLICANT INFORMATION

NAME: TRACERIES TELEPHONE: 301-656-5283

ADDRESS: 5420 Western Avenue  
CITY/STATE: Chevy Chase, MD 20015

SIGNATURE

DATE: September 19, 1994



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**PROPERTY NAME: Lafayette**

**PLEASE SUPPLY THE FOLLOWING NAMES AND ADDRESSES AS APPLICABLE.  
THIS INFORMATION MUST BE PROVIDED BEFORE YOUR PIF CAN BE  
CONSIDERED BY THE STATE REVIEW BOARD:**

Mayor: Paul D. Fraim  
1109 City Hall Building  
Norfolk, VA 23501

City Manager:  
James B. Oliver, Jr.  
1101 City Hall Building  
Norfolk, VA 23501

Director, Planning Division

John M. Dugan, Director  
Dept. of City Planning and Codes Administration  
508 City Hall Building

Chairman, Planning Commission

Dr. William L. Craig, Jr.  
451 Lee Point Road  
Norfolk, VA

Executive Director

Hampton Roads Planning District Commission  
Arthur L. Collins  
723 Woodlake Drive  
Chesapeake, Virginia 23320

City Council member or Supervisor in whose district the property  
is located:

Paul D. Fraim  
Dr. Mason C. Andrews

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#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bernstein, Paul. "Lafayette-Winona Gets Restoration Fever," The Virginian Pilot, August 26, 1979.

"The Lafayette Residence Park," Dispatch, May 25, 1903.

"Lafayette Residence Park on the Move," The Virginian Pilot, February 14, 1982.

MacFarlane, E. Lee, Map of Norfolk, Portsmouth and Vicinity, 1908

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1928